

Exhibit No. 8Date 2/11/09Bill No. SJ18

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Bethany Ticknor, I am 13 years old, and I am here to ask you to vote against Senate Joint Resolution number 18.

As you know, this resolution would give Montana a state dog. Montana currently has 24 state symbols and emblems. These are already enough symbols to represent Montana as a special and unique state.

We already have 4 animals that represent Montana; a state animal that is the grizzly bear, the state bird is the Western Meadowlark, the Mourning Cloak is the state butterfly, and our state fish is the Blackspotted Cutthroat Trout. Four animals is enough. I think that it is great that dogs help people in many ways, but that doesn't mean that there should be a state dog. A lot of different animals are special to people, but that doesn't mean that we should enact legislation to honor all of them.

State symbols are supposed to stand for something exceptional about Montana. It should be kind of unique to our state, not something that everyone has. If we have too many state symbols, then none of them will seem very special. There are proposals just this session to add 4 new state symbols (3 based on input from students); a fourth state song, a second state insect, a state pancake, and this one for a second state animal. Even if we add only one new state symbol a session, by the year 2050, we will have 45 state symbols or emblems. If you start having annual sessions, then there would be 65. The 24 existing state symbols and emblems are already enough.

The state symbols that we currently have do a good job of representing Montana, and should be left as they are without adding more. Please vote against Senate Joint Resolution number 18.

Thank you for your time.

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